Chemical Threats

What it is: Toxic substances, usually in gas or liquid form, that someone seeks to get onto or into human beings. They act immediately on physical systems to cause death or debilitation.

Examples: sarin, mustard gas, vx

Difficulties:

- won't work when it's freezing
- don't work when it's hot
- wind spreads it too thin too fast
- concentration must be high enough to work
- must get it on you or you must inhale it

Symptoms:

- sudden headache
- dimmed vision
- sudden runny nose
- excessive saliva/drooling
- difficulty breathing
- tightness in chest
- nausea, stomach cramps

If experiencing these in public:

- Did anything out of the ordinary just happen?
- Did you hear a loud pop?
- Did someone spray something?
- Are others getting sick?

What to do:

- Best protection: stay calm & get to safe air
- Shelter-In-Place
- see handout

Remember, terrorists have to do all the work. They have to get the concentration of the chemical up and keep it up for several minutes. All you have to do is quit getting it on you, quit breathing for several seconds, and put space between you and the attack.

Biological Threats

What it is: Bacteria and viruses intentionally introduced to harm human hosts (previously called "germ warfare"). Once inside, they propagate and cause disease.

Examples: anthrax, small pox, bubonic plague

Difficulties:

- difficult to develop and disperse
- effective dispersal affected by air & ground temperature, humidity, sunlight, precipitation, wind speed, and obstacles such as buildings
- "the more you know about this stuff, the more you realize how hard it is to use"
- reality check: during the period following 9/11 in which one person died each week from anthrax, 400 people died each week from flu and related ailments

Symptoms:

- likely delayed - an incubation period is typically required between first exposure and when disease symptoms appear

What to do:

- see handout

Nuclear Threats

What it is: A radioactive bomb made of highly enriched uranium and plutonium.

- alpha rays - skin stops these
- beta rays - newspaper and clothing stop these
- gamma rays - most dangerous; takes a lot of these to kill

Difficulties:

- developed only through sophisticated nuclear weapons programs

What it does:

- massive explosive blast (shock wave)
- intense heat
- intense radiation near detonation site
- death from trauma or significant radiation sickness

What to do:

- see handout

Dirty Bomb Threats

What it is: A bomb made of common explosives used to spread radioactive materials.

What it does:

- unlikely to cause large number of radiation fatalities
- high psychological trauma, economic impacts, and cleanup costs
- high danger from flying objects in immediate area
- increased long-term risk of some cancers

What to do:

- see handout

Follow Your Intuition - Be More Aware

Bottom Line: Live a normal life. Deny less. Honor your intuition more. Be willing to make a report if life places something relevant to terrorism in your view.

Myths:

- Anyone might be a terrorist - they are everywhere.
  Reality: We all know lots of people that we know are not terrorists.
- Remain alert at all times.
  Reality: Be open to things you notice that nag you and will not go away.

Pre-Incident Indicators are part of every incident:

- The vast majority of these are noticed by regular people, not police or FBI.
- If you intuit something questionable, ask questions. If your answers are unsatisfying, report it to the police.

"We will not let terrorism be a house guest where we need interact with it several times each day. Instead, we will look at it and then file it away where it can be accessed if needed, but not where it will dominate our thinking." Gavin de Becker